

Information Item: Update on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance in Indiana

Indiana was recently alerted by animal health officials from Pennsylvania that captive deer exposed to CWD had been shipped to captive cervid facilities in Indiana. One of these PA-originating deer has already been confirmed to have escaped from a captive cervid facility in Jackson County, along with several other deer from that same facility. Indiana DNR and Board of Animal Health (BOAH) actively conduct surveillance for CWD. The DNR samples between 900-1,000 wild deer each year for the disease. CWD has not been found in Indiana, but has been detected in free ranging and captive deer in nearby states. Illinois has detected CWD in free-ranging deer, approximately 40 miles west of the Lake County Indiana line, and Wisconsin has detected CWD in both captive and free-ranging deer.

CWD is a neurological disease found in deer, elk, and moose. It belongs to a group of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) or prion diseases. CWD is always fatal, and is spread through direct (animal to animal contact) and indirect (soil to animal) means. It is thought that the most common mode of transmission is through saliva or urine. Though CWD is similar to mad cow disease in cattle and scrapie in sheep, there is no known relationship between CWD and other TSE's found in humans. There is currently no evidence that CWD is transmissible to humans, though it is not recommended to consume meat from a deer that is known CWD positive.

The detection of CWD is certain to have negative impacts on state agency budgets. The DNR CWD monitoring program is currently grant supported and costs just over \$40,000 per year. If we experience a CWD outbreak, anticipated response costs will quickly surpass current CWD program expenditures. Indiana's experience with responding to a cervid disease outbreak came a few years ago when Tuberculosis (TB) was found in captive cervids and cattle. In the past 3 years, it is estimated state (DNR, BOAH) and federal partners (USDA, USFWS) have spent over \$1.2 million dollars in TB eradication and monitoring efforts in Indiana. CWD response and monitoring expenses for the state of Wisconsin have surpassed \$32 million dollars over a 5 year period and Illinois annually spends \$900,000 to monitor and manage CWD. Further compounding the issue is the loss of deer license sales revenue after a state confirms CWD. The year that Wisconsin first discovered CWD, deer firearm license sales decreased by 10% for residents and decreased by 20% for nonresidents. Wisconsin's deer license sales have never fully recovered.

